

**USPHS Pharmacist Professional
Advisory Committee (PharmPAC)
Mentoring Program**

**Commissioned Corps Pharmacy
Mentoring Network (CCPMN)
Operating Guidelines**

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Table of Contents

A. Introduction	3
B. Goals.....	3
C. Objectives	3
D. Responsibilities and Suggestions	4
E. Benefits.....	5
F. Qualifications.....	6
G. Implementation and Management	6
H. Program Evaluation	7
I. Resources.....	8

Commissioned Corps Pharmacy Mentoring Network Operating Guidelines

A. Introduction

It is crucial to the success U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (Corps) to have trained, competent, and well informed pharmacy officers capable of transitioning into leadership positions and carrying out the goals of the US Public Health Service (PHS). The Commissioned Corps Pharmacy Mentoring Network (CCPMN) is a program by which such leadership can be developed. Formed in 1996, the CCPMN is a formal, voluntary, one-on-one mentoring program for active duty Corps pharmacy officers. The mentor (an experienced senior officer, O-4 to O-6) provides guidance to the mentee (a less experienced officer, typically with an O-4 grade or below) on career goals and objectives and professional development. The professional relationship assists in developing specific skills and knowledge that will enhance the mentee's professional and personal growth. The program is open to all qualified Corps officers appointed into the Pharmacist Category.

B. Goals

- To provide a structured mentoring network capable of assisting the mentee in defining career goals, identifying and developing a career track, and identifying continuing education/skill development timelines (O-3, O-4, O-5, etc).
- To develop esprit de corps by providing an environment that fosters a sense of well-being, acceptance, and inclusion of all pharmacy officers into the culture of the Corps.
- To facilitate the transition of recently appointed pharmacy officers into the Corps and to promote the long-term career development of pharmacy officers.

C. Objectives

- To increase the morale, confidence, and retention of less-experienced junior pharmacy officers through the development of an interpersonal professional relationship with an experienced senior officer who has the following traits:
 - Professionalism: A positive attitude about the Corps and the pharmacy profession
 - Officership: A polished, professional image that reflects well on the Corps; the possession of moral fiber and values that helps to blend the relationship between service, the Corps, and society.
 - Servitude: A good working knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of the Corps
 - Growth: Is actively involved in and familiar with training and educational opportunities for the pharmacy profession
- To provide the opportunity for experienced senior pharmacy officers to participate in the development of less-experienced junior officers through the sharing of their expertise and knowledge.

- To develop and maintain a cadre of confident, competent, well informed pharmacy officers to be a source of strength and pride for the Corps.

D. Responsibilities and Suggestions

For the success of CCPMN, both the Mentor and Mentee must be active and committed participants. The following guidelines are recommended to ensure a successful relationship between the Mentor and Mentee.

- **Mentor**
 - A Mentor is an experienced and trusted Corps officer who provides knowledge about many subjects of interest to less-experienced junior officers, including: health care and other active-duty benefits, uniforms and military courtesy, awards, mobility, career progression, the promotion process, PHS-wide and category-specific activities, and professional organizations. While an individual Mentor will probably not have all of the answers, he or she should be able to refer a Mentee to the right source for appropriate information. The Mentor must be available to serve for a period of six months.

Responsibilities of the Mentor

- Be prepared and responsive to the requests and needs of the Mentee.
- Serve as a role model - share personal experiences; present a polished, professional image.
- Be a resource person - provide general information about the PHS, its two personnel systems; the Commissioned Corps, its standards of conduct, the proper wearing of the various uniforms, military etiquette and courtesy; professional training opportunities, etc.
- Be structured- plan and organize before meetings with the Mentee. The "Mentoring Relationship Guide" along with the listing of suggested topics should facilitate meeting flow and help ensure that identified topics are covered within the six month time frame.
- Listen - actively listen; be open, flexible, and understanding; keep conversations confidential. Be available.
- Counsel - establish a trusting, open relationship; help identify strategies for achieving your mentee's career goals and objectives.
- Motivate - be encouraging, inspiring, supportive, and available; provide positive feedback; create incentives.
- Guide - empower the mentee by offering suggestions and options, but allow the mentee to make the final decision.
- Offer insight - explain written and unwritten rules of the organization; help mentee to see the big organizational picture.
- Provide constructive critique of the experience at the conclusion of the six month mentoring period.

Mentee

A Mentee is a committed and motivated Corps officer who is willing to work and take responsibility for their career development and professional growth. A Mentee must be honest, open, and receptive to the guidance his/her Mentor has to offer.

Responsibilities of the Mentee

- Initiate - be proactive; schedule meetings; actively seek out your mentor.
- Participate - communicate openly with the mentor; be eager to learn; take advantage of information and suggestions offered; think ahead and contemplate career goals and objectives; interact with mentor to achieve desired goals.
- Listen - actively listen; be open to constructive criticism and positive feedback; consider all suggestions and options with an open mind; respect mentor's confidence and trust.
- Be responsible - always be considerate and respect mentor's time; express appreciation for assistance given; make only positive or neutral comments about the mentor to others.
- Provide constructive critique of the experience at the conclusion of the six month mentoring period.

Some helpful suggestions:

- Take responsibility - it takes two to have a successful mentoring relationship.
- Schedule meetings in advance. If there's a scheduling conflict, notify the mentor/mentee immediately and reschedule. The importance of these meetings should not be minimized.
- Work together to establish ground rules for the relationship during the first meeting. The "Mentoring Relationship Guide" should help direct the meetings.
- Keep a log or journal of the mentoring meetings and experiences. Use a check off list to keep track of topics covered.
- Augment the CCPMN Guide with personal development classes and workshops available through the Agency or community.
- Tailor the mentoring activities to minimize the impact on job duties and responsibilities.
- Notify the CCPMN Coordinator in instances of a mentoring mismatch. Either party has the option of terminating the relationship for any reason, expressed or not. We recognize that some mentoring relationships may not meet the expectations of the mentor and/or mentee and we will make every effort to reassign either party.
- Remember to complete and submit the CCPMN Evaluation Form at the end of the mentoring relationship.

E. Benefits

Many will benefit from participating in the CCPMN: the mentee, the mentor, as well as the Corps.

Benefits to Mentees

- Development of an interpersonal professional relationship with a caring, informed, supportive advisor
- Direction in navigating a complex organization and guidance in understanding the political and cultural environment of the Corps
- Ability to receive constructive feedback
- Direction in defining and achieving career goals
- Acquisition of an objective and credible source of information

Benefits to Mentors

- Satisfaction in helping the mentee define and achieve career/professional goals and objectives
- A sense of pride from observing the development of the mentee
- An opportunity to improve interpersonal communication, motivating, coaching, counseling, and leadership skills
- An opportunity to impart valuable information, expertise, and wisdom to a receptive, less-experienced junior officer and help shape and develop tomorrow's public health leaders.

Benefits to the Commissioned Corps

- Maintenance and continued development of public health leadership
- Improvement in retention rate of competent pharmacy officers
- Development of a more savvy, confident cadre of officers well versed in the culture and politics of the Commissioned Corps and the U.S. Public Health Service
- Assistance in the building of a solid foundation early in the new officer's career path

F. Qualifications

Mentor

- Appointed to the Pharmacist Category for at least 3 years and in the rank of O-4 or above when performing matches
- Currently in good standing with the Corps with no adverse personnel actions filed
- Basic ready
- Supervisory Approval
- Submitted the Mentor Nomination form available on the CCPMN Web Page (located at: <http://mentor.usphs-hso.org/MentorNewUser>).

Mentee

- All qualified Corps officers appointed into the Pharmacist Category.
 - All new call to active duty (CAD) pharmacy officers are offered mentoring through the CCPMN program
 - At anytime during their career, officers may submit a "Request for Mentor" form available on the CCPMN Web Page (located at: <http://mentor.usphs-hso.org/MentorNewUser>)

G. Implementation and Management

Mentor Nomination

- Mentor volunteers must submit a completed Mentor Nomination Form. The Mentor Nomination Form is available on the CCPMN Web Page (located at: <http://mentor.usphs-hso.org/MentorNewUser>).
- The program manager will be alerted to a new mentor application. The program manager/work group will review the qualifications of the officer based on the established qualifications.
- On a yearly basis, an email will be sent to all mentor volunteers and these officers will be asked to update their application.

Matching Process

- Officers who complete the “Request for Mentor” form have the opportunity to indicate if they have a potential mentor in mind. The program manager will ask new CAD pharmacy officers if they are already working with and receiving guidance from a senior pharmacy officer.
- The CCPMN Committee will keep the requests for specific mentors in mind when performing the matches. The CCPMN program manager will be responsible for the final match recommendations for Mentors and Mentees.
- Identification of a mentor
 - The mentee should have the freedom of "confidential" communication within the confines of the mentoring relationship. Therefore, the mentor should not be in the mentee's direct supervisory chain of command.
 - To reduce potential conflict of interest, the mentor should be at least two ranks higher than the mentee whenever possible.
 - To ensure potential Mentors are able to optimally relate to the Mentee, an effort will be made to pair up a Mentor who has current or past experience in the Operating Division (OPDIV) and/or geographic location to which the Mentee is assigned.
 - Additional considerations
 - Completion of BOTC/OBC
 - Prior military service
 - Participated as a mentee in the CCPMN
 - Successfully promoted through the Commissioned Corps process
- Mentors and Mentees will be notified once an assignment has been made.
- The mentor should read and sign the “Mentoring Agreement” form (contract).

H. Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is critical to the constant improvement of the CCPMN.

- The CCPMN Committee will contact mentees after two weeks of notification of the match to ensure they have been contacted by their new mentor and at 3 months and 6 months for follow-up.

- Evaluation forms are sent to both the mentee and mentor at the 6 month conclusion of the program. Mentors and Mentee should fill out and return the program evaluation forms to the program manager.
- The CCPMN Subcommittee is responsible for evaluating the feedback received from participants and incorporating necessary changes into the operating guideline.
- Initially, plan to have a six month mentor/mentee relationship. Participants will have the option of continuing the mentoring relationships if both are in agreement.

I. Resources

Mentoring Training and Resources can be found on the PharmPAC web site (located at http://www.usphs.gov/corpslinks/pharmacy/sc_career_mentoring.aspx). The resource tools are designed to assist both the mentor and mentee to effectively participate in the mentoring relationship. It is a compilation of information from various sources that address topics and issues frequently asked about. There are career development tools that might be useful for someone who is uncertain about their professional goals and objectives. It also contains a checklist of topics that should be covered within the six month time frame of the formal mentoring relationship.